

## **November 13, 2025**

At the regularly scheduled meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen/women of the Town of Canton held at the Town Hall at 85 Summer Street, November 13, 2025, at 6:00pm with Mayor Zeb Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Proctor, Shepard, and Hamlet were present.

### **A. Call to Order**

Mayor Smathers called the meeting to order at 5:57 p.m.

### **B. Roll Call**

Mayor Smathers stated that Manager Stinnett, Assistant Manager Walker, and Clerk Dunbar, and Attorney Morgan were present.

### **C. Pledge/Invocation**

Barrett Walker led those in attendance in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

### **D. Approval of Minutes:**

Mayor Smathers then asked the Board for approval of the minutes for the October 23, 2025, meeting. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2025, meeting and Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

## **E. Mayor Comments**

Mayor Smathers honored the Bethel Mites football team for winning the Superbowl. Mayor Smathers stated that the football team is a part of the Canton family, even though you start off as Demons, you end up as Black Bears. Mayor Smathers continued, he told the team that he knew the hardships they have faced recently with the passing of their friend Major. Mayor Smathers stated that they showed a lot of people what this Town was made of.

Mayor Smathers thanked the coaches in attendance for their hard work on and off of the field, Mayor Smathers continued saying that this team will always look up to them as coaches.

Mayor Smathers said to the team that they deserve more than a social media post and that is why we brought you here tonight. Mayor Smathers and the Board gave the Bethel Mites football team a free one-day pool pass.

Mayor Smathers and the Board gave Coach Johnny James a Key to the City.

Johnny James stated that this is not just about me, but it is about this community, we have each other's back. Mr. James thanked his family, the coaches, and the Board.

Mayor Smathers congratulated Alderwoman Prcotor and Alderman Shepard for their recent reelection. Mayor Smathers also thanked Neil Swanger and Adam Hatton running a great campaign.

Mayor Smathers thanked Clerk Dunbar for his work in completing the playground.

Mayor Smathers stated that he contacted DOT asking when they are going to remove the red lights on Newfound Street.

Mayor Smathers asked if the Town put a four-way stop sign on Old Clyde Road. Chief Sluder answered no, it was DOT. Mayor Smathers reiterated that it was the DOT, not the Town of Canton.

Mayor Smathers asked if Champion Drive is a State maintained road, he continued stating that he has received calls about potholes in the road. Manager Stinnett answered yes, but the potholes are from repairing water leaks. Manager Stinnett stated that the Street Department has filled the holes and will cold patch them shortly.

#### **F. Aldermen/women Comments**

Alderwoman Mull thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Alderman Hamlett congratulated Alderman Shepard, Alderwoman Proctor, and Mayor Smathers on their reelection. Alderman Hamlett stated that we are all a team, we have accomplished a lot so far, and we are going to accomplish more. Alderman Hamlett continued by saying we are not democrats, or republicans, but we are representatives of this Town. Alderman Hamlett stated that if people are upset with us, please pick-up the phone and call us. Alderman Hamlett continued by stating what you see tonight is what the founding fathers intended our government to look like, this is why we ran for this office in the first place; we want to do a good job.

Alderwoman Proctor thanked everyone for coming to vote, she also said that Adam Hatton and Neil Swanger ran clean campaigns, and we all just want the best for Canton. Alderwoman Proctor stated she has received numerous compliments about the playground. Alderwoman Proctor stated that she was honored to have the Bethel Mites football team here tonight. Alderwoman Proctor continued stating that those children are our future.

Alderman Shepard thanked Clerk Dunbar, Manager Stinnett, and the rest of the Town staff for their work in completing the playground. Alderman Shepard also thanked everyone who voted in the election. Alderman Shepard stated that there was a storm drain on Poplar and McClure Streets that gives the appearance that it is about to fall in. Josh Pirowski, Street Supervisor answered that he is aware of the storm drain and believes a trash truck has caused the damage. Alderman Shepard stated that he and this board want to be approachable, and if there are any issues, they want citizens to call them, in hopes that they can fix the issue.

Mayor Smathers thanked the press and Carl Cortright for pushing the correct information out into the community. Mayor Smathers thanked Colter Pirowski about how much he appreciates his Dad for his dedication to the Town of Canton. Mayor Smathers stated that Mr. Pirowski is one of the toughest people he knows, and Mayor Smathers thanked Colter for letting the Town barrow his Dad.

#### **G. Public Comments:**

Judy Latham from Smoky Meadows Apartments stated that her electricity was turned off by Duke Energy, even though she paid her power bill. Mrs. Latham was upset with Duke Energy and asked the Board for assistance.

Mayor Smathers asked Mrs. Latham for her information, and he would pass this information along. Mayor Smathers stated that is outside of the Town jurisdiction, but he will pass this along to Duke Energy.

Alderman Hamlett stated that with this cold weather wave it is important that we are aware of people in need who may find themselves without power. Alderman Hamlett asked everyone to call in a welfare check if they think someone in the community is in need.

Alderwoman Proctor stated during code purple, Haywood Pathways will accept anyone in need of shelter.

## **H. Managers Reports**

Assistant Manager Walker gave the cash report.

Manager Stinnett stated that the playground fencing will start next Wednesday, and they hope to be finished by Thanksgiving. Manager Stinnett continued saying when the fence is finished, the donor tree can go up and then have a ribbon cutting and donor celebration in the spring.

Manager Stinnett stated that FEMA has decided that the Armory project is going to be classified under Hurricane Helene. Manager Stinnett stated that the pre-bid meeting will be held on November 20th and the bid for that project is due December 18<sup>th</sup> by 2pm. Manager Stinnett stated that the Armory will look different, but it will be multiuse facility with basketball, pickleball, a commercial kitchen, and a multipurpose room. Manager Stinnett reiterated that once the Armory is finished, it will be a great place to host events.

Manager Stinnett stated that the new Town Hall and the new Police Department is still an uncertainty with FEMA. Manager Stinnett stated that we did get approval for demolishing old Town Hall.

Manager Stinnett stated that the cost of healthcare is astronomical, and we are searching for better insurance for the Town employees. Manager Stinnett stated that this is a top priority for the Town's administration.

Alderman Hamlett stated that this is just not a Canton problem, but it is a problem with many municipalities throughout North Carolina, and an education problem. Alderman Hamlett thanked Manager Stinnet for her diligence.

## **I. Old Business**

## **New Business**

### **1. Recognizing Bethel Mites Football team**

See in Comments from the Mayor

### **2. Recognizing Retirees**

Manager Stinnett stated that in the past we have not recognized retirees, but she wanted to do that tonight. Manager Stinnett recognized three retirees Gilbert Zamudio, Linton Wheeler, and Mark Pace for their services and their dedication to the Town of Canton.

Josh Piurowski stated that Gilbert would be hard to replace.

Mayor Smathers thanked Gilbert and said that his smile can brighten someone's day. Mayor Smathers told a story about Gilbert working in the rain during the Labor Day Festival with a smile on his face.

Mayor Smathers stated that the reality of it is, that people can celebrate Thanksgiving because of both Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Pace, the work that you do, and how much you care. Mayor Smathers thanked the families for their sacrifices.

Alderwoman Mull stated that we are not cheerful that you are leaving, but we thank you for your work, and the Town is better because of the three of you.

Alderman Hamlett thanked Gilbert for his niceness and his smile.

Alderman Hamlett also thanked Mr. Pace and Mr. Wheeler for their hard work.

Alderman Shepard thanked the men

Alderwoman Proctor thanked the men for their work and stated that their legacy will continue.

The board wished the men a good retirement and an exciting new life chapter.

### 3. Paving Awards

Manager Stinnett presented the Board with two paving contracts. Manager Stinnett stated that the first contract was awarded to Custom Paving in the amount of \$194,723 and this work is for Popular, Thompson, North, Axley, and Wesley Streets. Manager Stinnett reminded the Board that some of the paving will be done in sections.

Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to approve the award to Custom Paving in the amount of \$194,723. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

- Lonesome Mountain Paving

Manager Stinnett stated that the second paving award will go to Lonesome Mountain Paving for Ann, Charles, and Pharr Streets in the amount of \$108,478. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the award for Lonesome Mountain Paving in the amount of \$108,478. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

#### 4. Fire Apparatus Bay Lease

Manager Stinnett presented the Board with a lease for the fire department's apparatus bay. Manager Stinnett reminded the Board that the Army Corp of Engineers will no longer hold the lease for the fire apparatus bay. Manager Stinnett stated that Whit Contractors will hold the lease, the Town will be obligated to pay the lease, and FEMA will reimburse the Town. Manager Stinnett stated that the lease gives the Town an option to buy the fire apparatus bay if the board chose to do so.

Alderwoman Mull made motion to approve the lease with Whit Contractors. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

#### 5. Policy Updates

Assistant Manager Walker presented the Board with personal policy updates regarding alcohol and substance abuse policies. Assistant Manager Walker explained that these policies are more detailed and are recommendations from the UNC School of Government.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the policy updates. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

#### Police Policy

Police Chief Sluder presented to the Board an update on the police departments K-9 policy. Police Chief Sluder stated that the updated policy includes removing language related to bite training, because the Police Department does not train the K-9s to bite. Police Chief Sluder continued that they added definitions for clarification.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve the updated police policy. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Chief Sluder added that K-9 Terry has passed his training, and he is doing well working in the field.

#### **6. Swearing in Date and Time**

December 11, 2025, at 6pm swearing in during the regular called meeting. The Board agreed to have the swearing in during the next regular called meeting.

#### **7. Set a Special Called Meeting: December 2, 2025, at 5pm**

Manager Stinnett asked the Board to set a special called meeting for December 2, 2025, at 5pm to discuss the RFQ for the owner advisor presentation.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to set a special called meeting for December 2, 2025, at 5pm. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

#### **8. Tax**

Manager Stinnett presented to the Board the ten-year tax release, the tax settlement, and the order to collect. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the ten-year tax release, the tax settlement, and the order to collect. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

- Ten Year Tax Release

- Tax Settlement

- Order to Collect

Manager Stinnett reminded the Board about Santa's Workshop event that will be held in Sorrells Street Park on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

Manager Stinnett had a request from KKs Shiver Shack to set up on town property to sell snow cones during the Christmas Parade. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to allow KKs Shiver Shack to sell snow cones during the Christmas Parade. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Manager Stinnett reminded the Board that there will not be a tree lighting ceremony, but we will turn on the lights before the parade.

#### **K. Closed Session: Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3)(4)(5)**

At 7:18 p.m. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3). Alderman Shepard seconded the motion, and all were in favor and the motion carried. At 7:56p.m. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session and Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion will all in favor the motion passed. No action was taken. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

#### **L. Adjournment**

The next Special Called meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 5:00p.m. at Town Hall located at 85 Summer Street, Canton, NC 28716. There being no additional business, Mayor Smathers adjourned the meeting at 7:56p.m.

---

Sam Dunbar, Town Clerk